

## **PART 1 CENTRAL DISTRICT PLAN**

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See Section 2 for these small area plans: Downtown Plan, New Bern/Edenton Plan, South Park Plan, College Park/Idlewild Neighborhood Plan, Mordecai Neighborhood Plan, Blount/Halifax Small Area Plan, Oakwood Park Neighborhood Plan.

### **MAPS**

## **Background**

### **Orientation**

The Central District is bounded by Rocky Branch Creek and the railroad on the west; Brookside Drive, Glascock Street, Raleigh Boulevard and Gatling Branch Creek on the east. The southern boundary runs along Exum Drive, Cumberland Street, Bragg Street, Garner Road and Branch Street. The northern boundary generally follows the railroad. The district lies inside the Beltline and contains 2000 acres or over three square miles. Although much of the district is residentially developed, the downtown area is the core of Raleigh's Central Area Regional Center and contains many governmental, cultural, commercial, banking, retail and service uses. Industrial and commercial/service uses are also concentrated along the railroad in the western section of the district. Recent positive changes have created interest in redevelopment in the Central District. Redevelopment activities have emphasized the strengths of the downtown area as the center of government, banking, cultural and convention activities.

### **Existing Land Use and Zoning**

Residential uses account for 44 percent of land in the Central District. Single family uses take up 782 acres or 28 percent of the total land area, while multifamily uses occupy 438 acres or 16 percent of the district. The majority of the 215 acres of office development is government related and located within the State Government Complex. Federal, county and city government offices are also concentrated downtown. Three percent of the total land area is devoted to parks and recreation, particularly Tarboro Road Park, the downtown squares, Fayetteville Street Mall and Rocky Branch Greenway. Service related uses, which include the educational facilities of St. Augustine's and Peace Colleges and Shaw University, comprise 15 percent or 405 acres. Wholesale and retail trade uses occupy 121 acres, or 4 percent of the land. Cemeteries occupy 116

acres in the district. Manufacturing, industrial and other uses are each less than 3 percent of the total.

Residential zoning categories take up 56 percent, or 1,551 acres in the Central District. There are 198 acres, or 7 percent of the total, in the Business Zoning District. This is the zoning that applies to most of downtown. The combined retail/business zoning districts take up about 172 acres, or 6 percent, while industrial zoning occupies 436 acres, or 16 percent of the total. Much of the Central District is also under one of the following overlay districts: the Downtown Residential Housing, the Historic, the Neighborhood Conservation, or the Pedestrian Business overlay district.

### **Population and Employment Projections**

In 1991 the Central District had a population of 18,438 or approximately 8 percent of Raleigh's total population. By 1998 the district had grown to 21,715, making it the seventh most populous district. Between 1990 and 1998, population increased by 17.8 percent. Due to the lack of land suitable for residential development, the Central District is not projected to increase greatly in population during the 1991 to 2025 period.

In 1995 there were 27,615 jobs in this district; 3 percent highway retail, 4 percent retail, 17 percent industrial, 23 percent service, and 53 percent office.

## **Systems Plans**

### **Transportation**

Direct access to and through downtown will be improved by extending Glenwood Avenue to South Saunders Street. In addition to planned improvements to the street system, the elimination of parking along some Central District thoroughfares would improve their use for through traffic, thus alleviating the use of residential streets for through traffic. Short range public transportation goals include additional transit services to redevelopment areas such as Hillsborough Street, Dorothea Dix Property and Downtown East. Regional rail transit corridors converge in the downtown area at the proposed location of an intermodal transportation center. These fixed guideway corridors should have a significant impact on the Central District with increased residential densities and mixed use opportunities.

### **Water/Wastewater**

To provide increased wastewater capacity to the Central District, projects are planned to rehabilitate some existing major wastewater mains. As urban uses in the Central District intensify, wastewater subsystems will be monitored for necessary improvement as shown on the Water and Wastewater Plans, Chapter 5 of the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Parks, Recreation and Greenways**

The Central District needs an active recreation facility as an amenity for residential development. Appropriate vacant land for recreation and open space should be considered for purchase whenever available. Possible park sites include: E. B. Bain and Washington school properties and the old water treatment plant property. Specialized facilities, such as the trails proposed along both sides of Capital Boulevard and the one connecting Oakwood Cemetery with the City Cemetery should be pursued aggressively. The private sector should be encouraged, through performance standards and incentives, to integrate recreation and open space into redevelopment

site plans, particularly downtown. Through innovative approaches, the City should obtain or create open space or recreational facilities or redevelop existing areas to meet the projected need for one additional community park. For more information see the Parks, Recreation and Greenways Plan, Chapter 5 of the Comprehensive Plan.

## **URBAN FORM AND LAND USE POLICIES**

### **•Promote Higher Density Housing**

An urbanizing land use pattern with a variety of affordable, quality living environments can be achieved by promoting higher density housing with appropriate public amenities. Incentives may include special use permits which allow high density in nonresidential zones. The density credit system could be extended and allowable densities applied to the existing Special High Density Residential District could be used in other sections of the planning district, such as along regional rail corridors at transit stations. Conditional Use Zoning could be creatively applied, and mixed use developments encouraged. Existing buildings could be adaptively reused as residential developments. Compatible higher density, large tract residential infill should be encouraged.

### **•Protect Established Neighborhoods**

Infill policies should protect the character of established residential neighborhoods. Neighborhood planning can establish guidelines and suggest rezonings that bring zoning into conformity with existing residential development patterns. Overlay zoning may be an option in these rezonings. Urban design standards in the Comprehensive Plan can ensure the compatibility of new development with its surroundings, while zoning and subdivision design standards can encourage amenities. Adequate transitions between the more intensive land uses of the downtown and adjacent residential districts should be provided, and policy boundary lines can stabilize neighborhoods adjoining nonresidential uses. Neighborhood cut through traffic is discouraged, and the quality and quantity of recreational spaces within residential areas should be increased. Any adverse effects that major capital projects might have on neighborhoods should be identified. The cooperative partnership between the City, neighborhoods and developers should be strengthened. A workable site plan review process for infill development projects should be established. The City could assist developers in assembling land in the central city for new development where appropriate, while using redevelopment planning techniques to define the special needs of declining neighborhoods and their residents.

### **•Preserve the Historic Center of the City**

The 1792 patterns of streets and public squares and architectural styles of various periods remain today as vivid reminders of the past. Historic preservation planning should also address the restoration and maintenance of historic sites and districts and the adaptive re-use of older structures. Large houses can be sensitively re-used for multi-family purposes.

### **•Conserve Neighborhood Services**

City strategies which stimulate private reinvestment and commercial redevelopment should be applied to these locations: North Person Street, New Bern Avenue from Tarboro Road to Raleigh Boulevard, Wake Forest Road at Brookside, Rock Quarry Road south of Lenoir Street and South Street at South Saunders. In order to remove some of the constraints which prevent new investment in these neighborhood service areas, Business District Plans and Pedestrian Business Overlay Districts should be applied to provide for greater flexibility of performance standards and controls for these areas.

### •Encourage Mixed Use Developments

New development in the Central district should be integrated with the existing fabric of the built environment. Mixed use developments are strongly encouraged. Where large infill sites are designated for commercial development, the current zoning of these parcels should be re-evaluated, with special attention to housing possibilities, to determine the most desired land use. Among those areas which should be reviewed are the tract on New Bern Avenue east of Swain Street and the site at Person and South Streets. New development should be compatible with surrounding structures and strengthen the sense of visual order and stability of the area.

### •Establish and Use Urban Design Guidelines

Good urban design can enhance those distinctive qualities that make the Central district an attractive place. Urban design guidelines should recognize and emphasize the economic value of good design. Guidelines should encourage redevelopment, infill, re-use of existing structures and development of public spaces. Existing development regulations should be revised. New, flexible performance standards should encourage creativity in site plans, including increased use of higher densities, protection of established neighborhoods, recognition of the importance of compatibility in size and scale among buildings, and improved site plan review requirements. Educational programs should be developed, including urban design promotional materials, design guidelines for both public and private development projects and design awards programs and competitions.

### •Expand the Employment Base

In order to achieve economic growth and revitalization in the years to come, expansion of the district's employment base will be necessary. Material processing and packaging, distribution, data processing, higher education, research and development, and state and federal government are encouraged in the Central District. Such development should be located and designed to minimally affect adjacent neighborhoods and the environment. Clean industries that integrate well with other uses are encouraged in sections of the Central District other than downtown.

Economic growth requires a reinvestment strategy that identifies, evaluates and eliminates barriers to growth. Reinvestment and redevelopment should be emphasized primarily in the downtown and Capital Boulevard areas. Reinvestment strategies can accomplish several objectives. Income and tax base can be retained, while providing jobs, particularly for the unemployed and area residents. Expansion and recruitment of retail and service jobs can be improved, while retaining existing firms and fostering their expansion. The City can conserve the built urban environment and improve the aesthetic quality of the district. The hazards of vacant buildings can be curtailed by reuse.

The City's Economic Development Strategy seeks to improve under-used and/or deteriorating employment areas. This strategy targets downtown for economic development programs such as urban design assistance, streetscape programs and a business loan pool. The strategy includes policies which establish public funding priorities for water, wastewater and transportation improvements that would support planned growth. Coordinated public-private organizational and marketing efforts to support redevelopment and reinvestment are encouraged by the strategy, as well as appropriate zoning that would support growth.

The current Economic Development Strategy should be expanded to identify other areas where reinvestment programs are needed. Specific business location strengths and weaknesses, as well as job needs, should be examined, as should new and additional reinvestment approaches.

The possibilities of further use of creative financing techniques from both public and private sources to support reinvestment efforts should be explored. A study should be conducted to review financial incentives and mechanisms which could be used to encourage economic redevelopment and reinvestment in the Central District. Creative uses of the capital market, financial institutions and private foundations should be formulated and pursued. In addition, the City should continue its efforts to acquire more authority from the State to allow greater flexibility in generating revenue to support economic growth in developed areas of the City.

Small area plans should be prepared as needed to address land use needs and unique conditions of potential redevelopment areas. Small area plans may propose specific land use actions needed to stimulate economic growth. Proposals and strategies for area improvements address necessary land use changes and emphasize the compatibility in use, size and scale of new construction with surrounding uses in development and infill locations. Business district and corridor plans for deteriorating retail service areas should also be prepared. These plans must find solutions for the blight of deteriorating commercial/employment areas and must stimulate reinvestment.

A coordinated public-private marketing program should be developed that addresses the district's image and increases private sector awareness of redevelopment and reinvestment opportunities. The marketing program may include awards for business excellence, design competitions for infill sites, and publicity of successful reinvestment projects.

### **Small Area Plans**

These small area plans apply to areas within the Central District and are found in Section 2 of the Comprehensive Plan: Downtown Small Area Plan, New Bern/Edenton Corridor and Neighborhood Plan, South Park Neighborhood Plan, College Park/Idlewild Neighborhood Plan, Mordecai Neighborhood Plan, Blount/Halifax Small Area Plan, Oakwood Park Neighborhood Plan.